

2003 Annual Survey of State Government

**Library & Information
Services Department
Montana State Library**

Introduction

The survey was announced via email to 24 agencies beginning November 3, 2003.

As in 2002, the email described the purpose of the survey, gave an URL to click through to complete it, and offered a chance at three prize books for those who completed the survey.

1424 responses from all 24 agencies contacted were received during the month the survey was open.

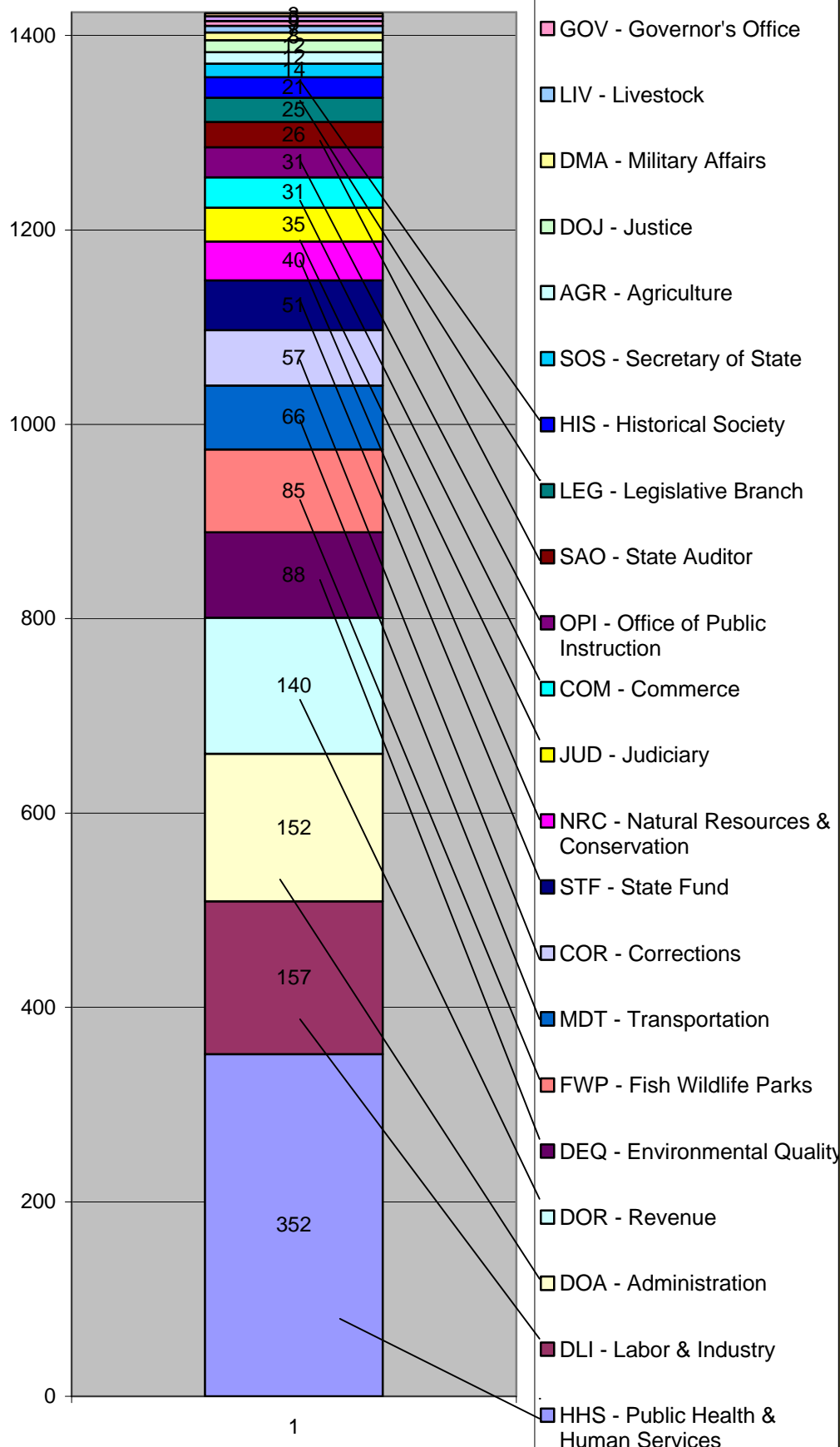
The response nearly triples the return from 2001 (533), almost doubles the return from 2002 (774), and represents 14% of the state government workforce (excluding higher education).

Answers for questions with multiple choices were randomized to respondents.

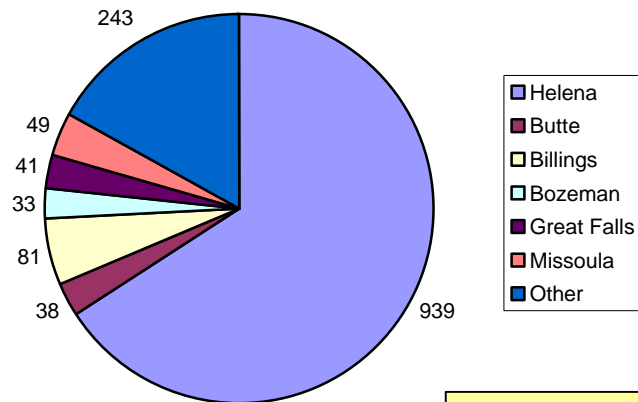
This overall summary of survey results is submitted as a component of the LISD report to the Montana State Library Commission for February 2004.

Suzy Holt
Client Services Supervisor

1. For which state agency do you work?



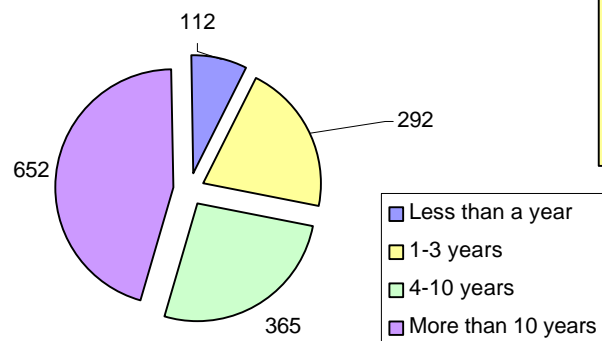
2. Where is your office located?



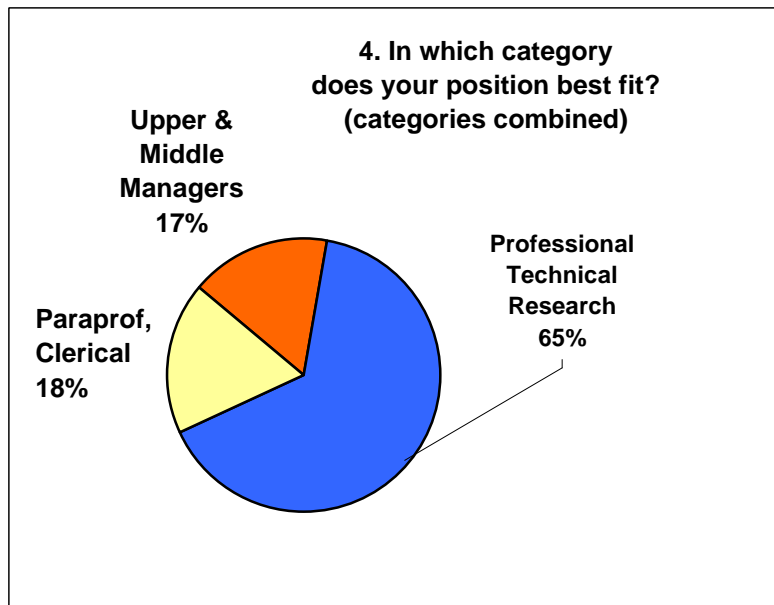
As expected, most respondents are located in Helena (66%).

However, state employees based in 57 other communities also responded.

3. How long have you worked for state government?

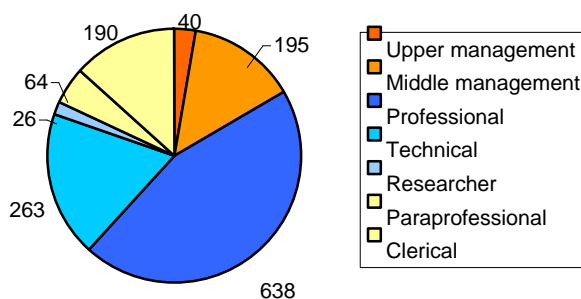


46% of respondents have been with state government for more than ten years.



82% of respondents are professional or management level employees, the “decision-makers” that are our target user population.

4. In which category does your position best fit? (detail)

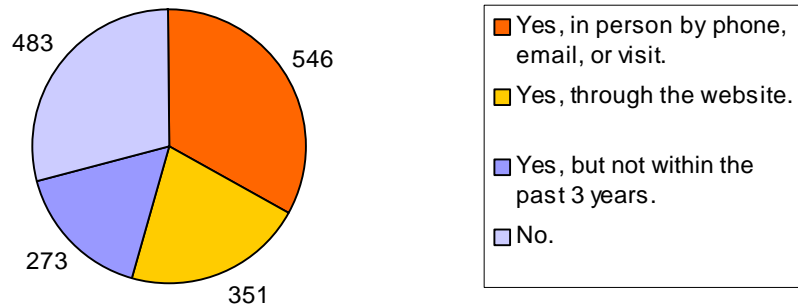


The Montana Human Resources Standards and Services Bureau provided numbers of employees in the three broad categories we specified in the above chart.

If respondents self-reported their position category appropriately, the following percentage of workforce categories responded to the survey:

24% of 995 “officials/administrators”
 12% of 7,745 “technicians-professionals”
 14% of 1769 “office/clerical & paraprofessional”

5. Have you ever used the Montana State Library?

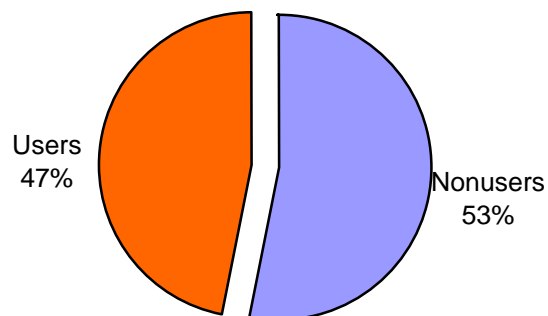


Both library users and non-users responded in substantial numbers.

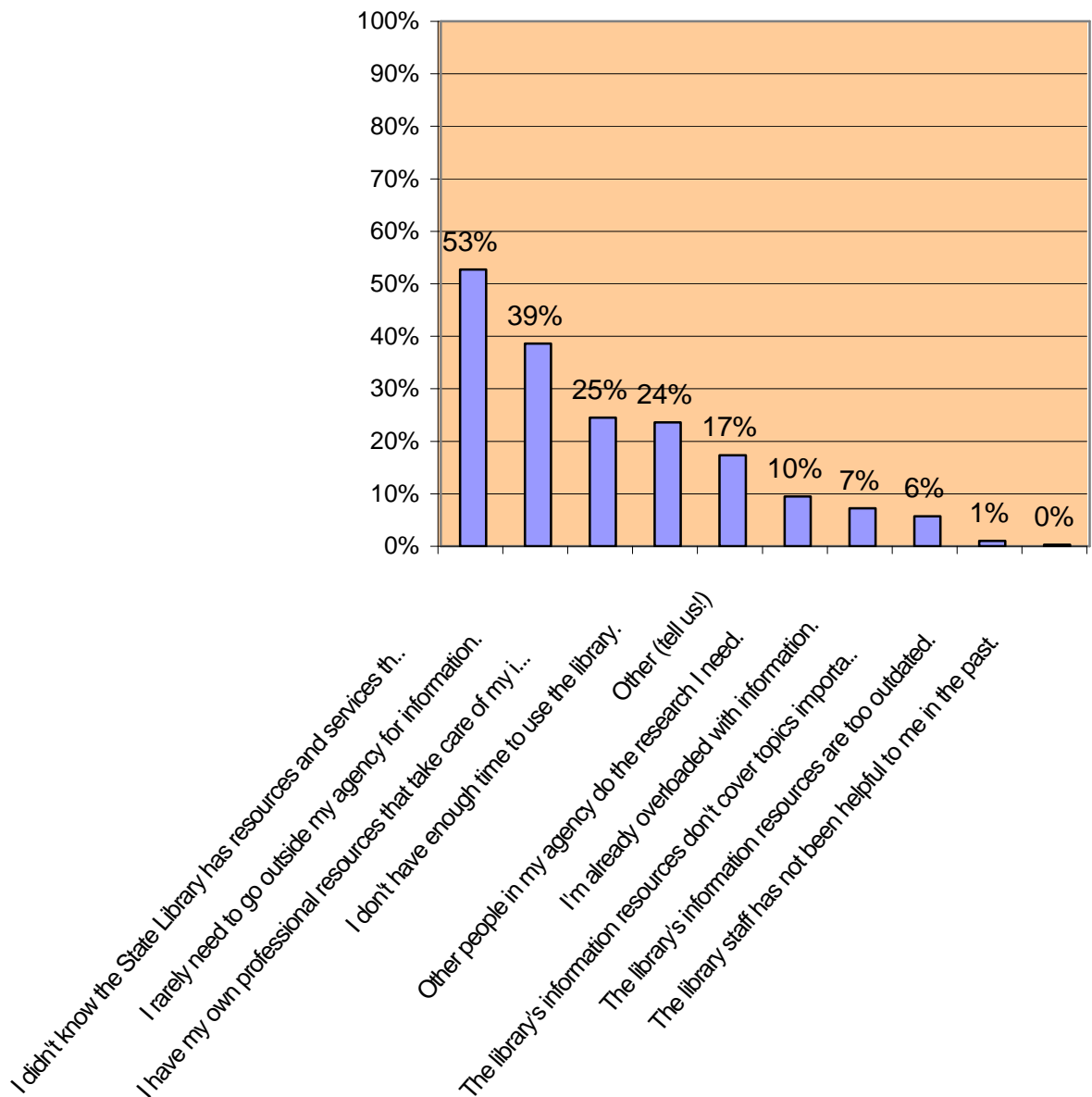
For the purposes of later analyzing response by users, "Users" (47%) is defined as those who have used the library, either directly or through the website, within the past three years.

These responses will best reflect use of services and resources developed since the Preferred Future statement and LISD reorganization.

Proportion of respondents who are "Users" and "NonUsers"



6. NON-USERS: "Below are some reasons you might not currently use the library. Please check all that apply."



This is the first year to probe non-users for the reasons they have not used the library. Questions 6 and 7 are new on the survey.

The majority (53%) of non-user respondents are simply not aware that library resources and services pertinent to their work are available to them.

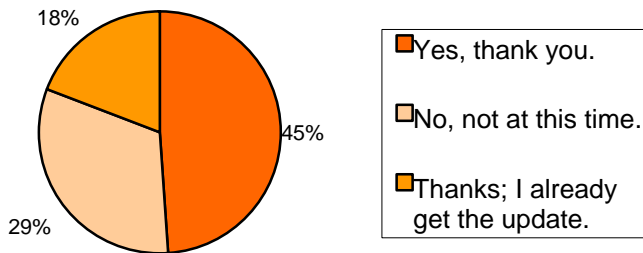
Generally, MSL marketing efforts have focused on NRIS, the general public and library interests statewide. Two previous annual surveys and a bookmark sent with paychecks have targeted state government. For the past year, LISD has routinely sent new state employees an email inviting them to use library services and linking them to the LISD homepage.

Most comments left by those who selected "Other" (see a selection of comments below) asked for more information about resources and how to use them or expressed an intention to try out the library as a result of the survey.

As respondents exited the web-based survey, they were taken to the LISD homepage and had an immediate opportunity to read about services and explore resources.

Interest in the library is also reflected in the fact that 641 respondents requested to be added to the monthly email update list.

17. Would you like to receive brief monthly updates about library workshops, services and resources by email?



A variety of comments about reasons for not using the library left under "Other" on question six:

"I was not aware this resource was available. As I get more computer literate I will utilize the Library."

"Because I am not on the state network, I find it impossible to get full text articles, and have not given the time to request them individually."

"I do not think to try the state library, but I am hoping to start in the near future."

"I just don't always think of the library and tend to use the internet for new updated information in my field."

"Living outside of Helena I guess I thought it would not be feasible to use the State Library, nor do I even know how."

"Just found out about library before starting survey."

"Will try to utilize it in the future!"

"My position is limited in research now, but the Library has been greatly helpful in the past."

"Being new to the position, the opportunity has not presented itself, however when I worked for a contractor my state contact did get some information from the library for me. I think it is a great resource and will probably use it as some point."

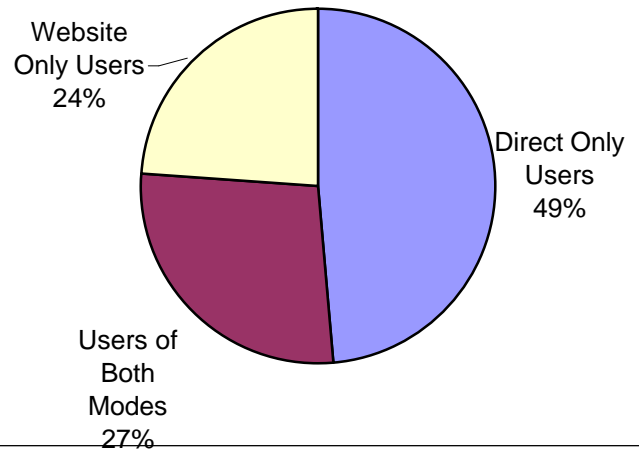
Other comments by non-users, under question 7 "How can we improve the Library's ability to serve your needs as a state government worker?", are being analyzed in subcategories, e.g. by agency.

As MSdL moves toward the digital library, it is important to track how users actually use us.

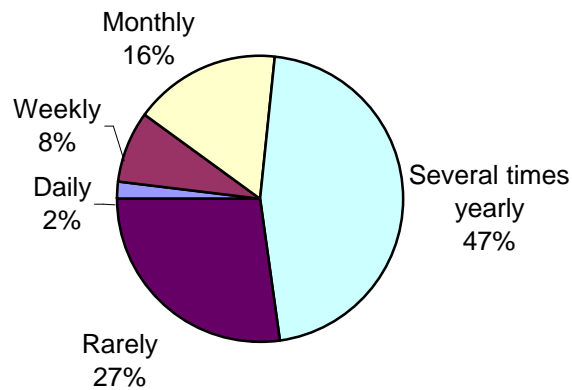
Just over half (51%) now use the website; more than half of the website users also use the library directly.

A large proportion, 49%, continues to contact the library only directly, either by telephone, email, or walk in.

**Users compared
by mode of using the library
n = 669**



8. How often do you use the Montana State Library, either in person or through its website?

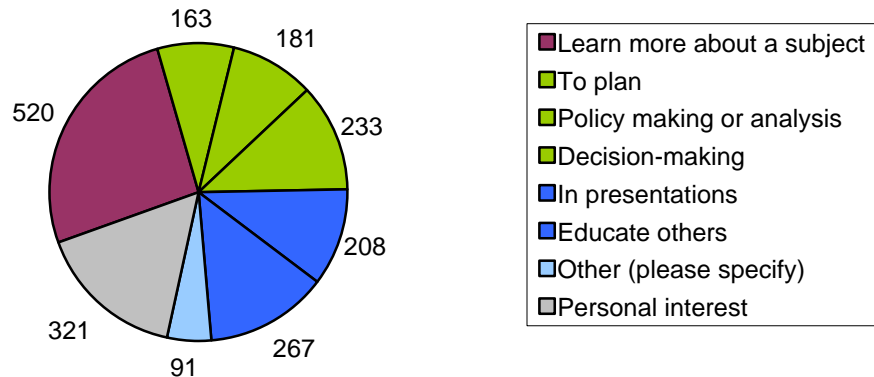


26% of respondents appear to use the library regularly and routinely.

Another 47% use it several times yearly, presumably "as needed."

9. How do you use the information you find with library resources?

Check all that apply.
n = 666

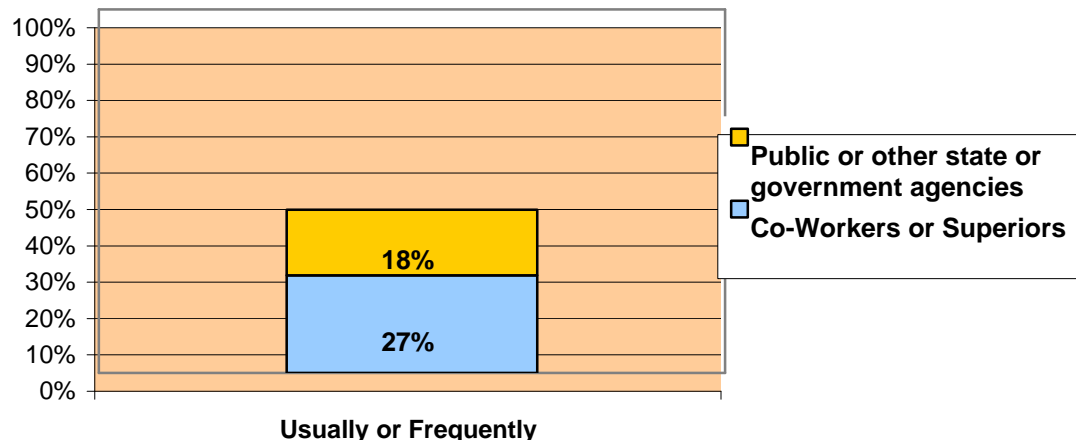


The LISD Services to State Government Preferred Future statement, adopted by the Montana State Library Commission in October of 1999, emphasized becoming a strategic partner with agency professionals and executives in fulfilling their agencies' legislated mandates.

Delivering timely, authoritative information resources pertinent to state government decision-making processes became a priority for LISD. Questions 9 and 10 were the first survey attempt to learn how respondents actually use the information obtained through library services.

The chart above shows that the information provided becomes integrated into agencies' program activities. The chart below confirms that individuals often serve a broader agency interest when using the library.

10. Do you obtain information from the State Library at the request of or for use with others?



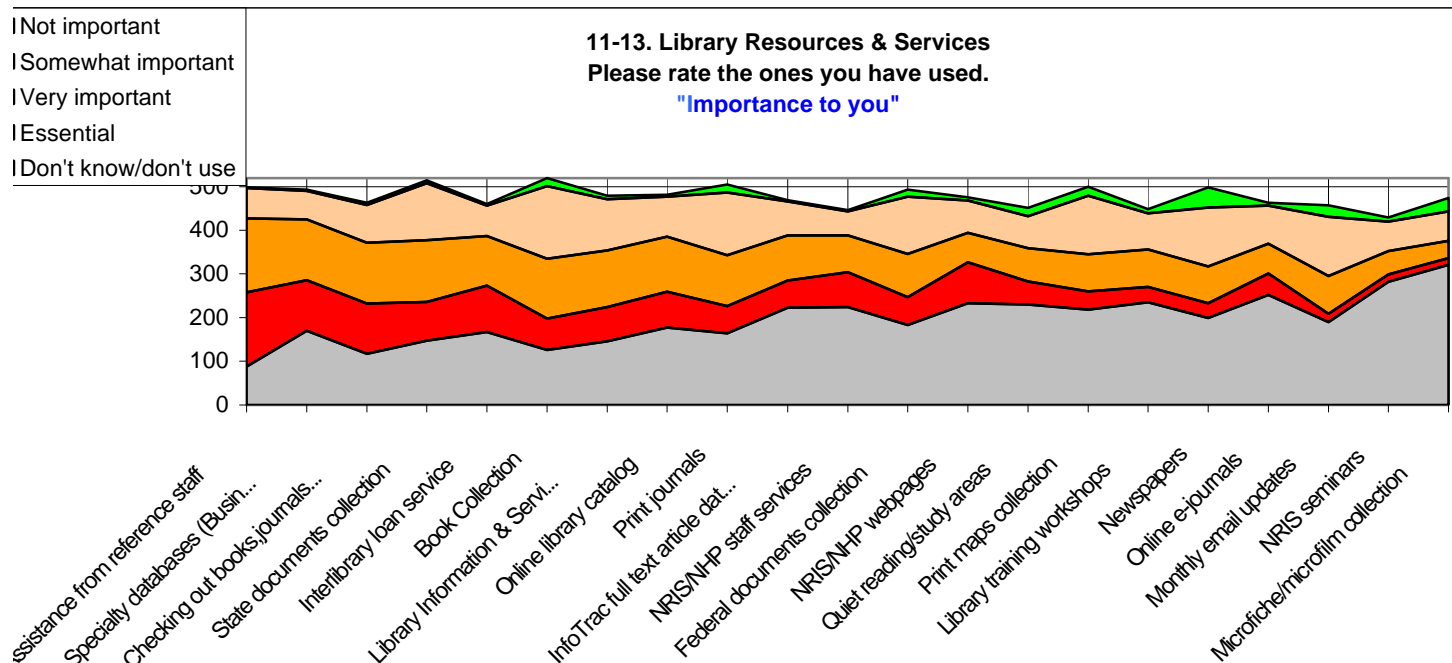
Survey questions 11 – 13 asked respondents to rate the importance, and then their satisfaction, with each of the listed resources or services that they use. This chart reflects ratings of importance, and is sorted by the total number of persons rating it “essential” or “very important”.

Overall, rating in the top 10 highest as the most used, “essential” and “very important” are:

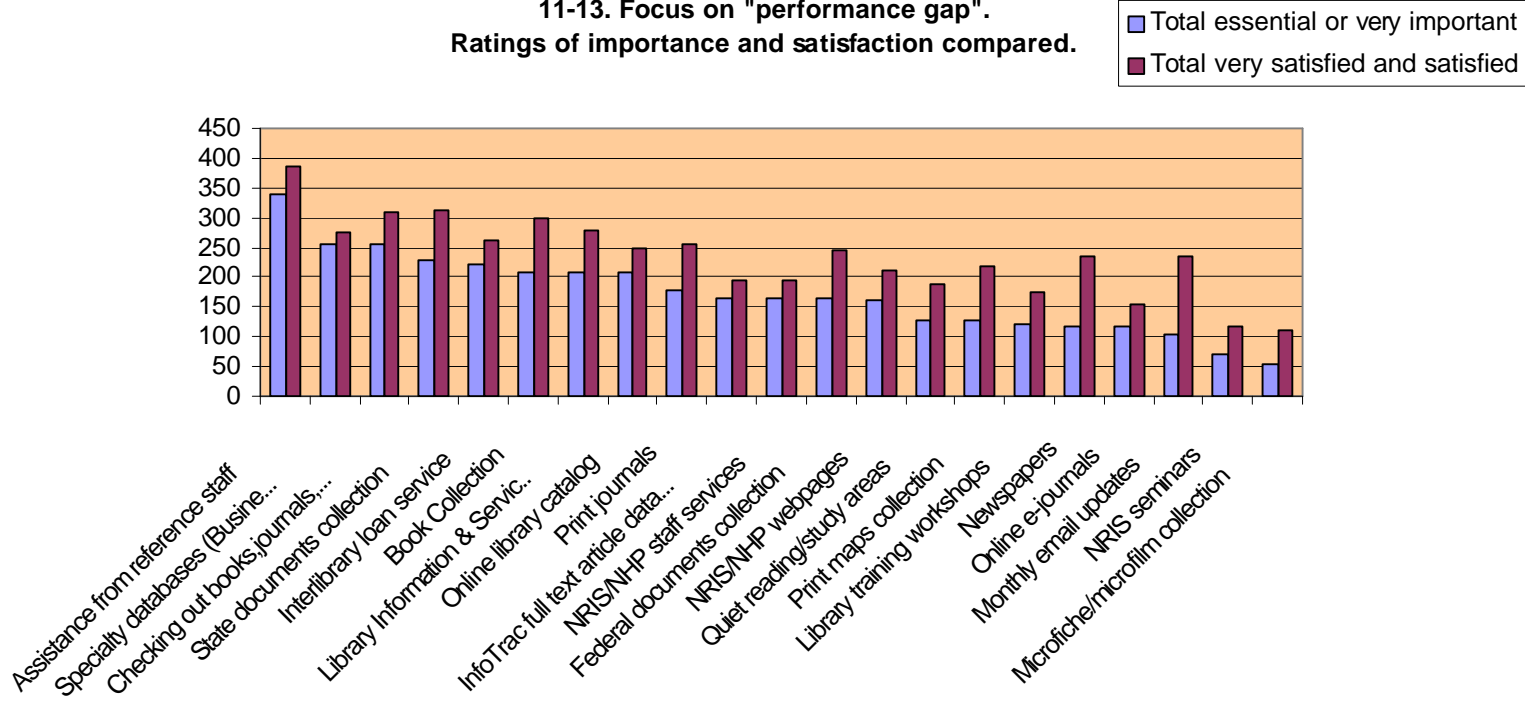
- Assistance from reference staff
- Specialty databases
- Checking out books and journals
- State documents collection
- Interlibrary loan service
- Book collection
- Library & Information Services Dept. webpages
- Online library catalog
- Print journals
- InfoTrac

These results suggest a need for more publicity regarding the newer, less traditional, electronic resources.

Ratings of importance will also be analyzed for individual agencies and for upper and middle management to inform future marketing and outreach efforts.



**11-13. Focus on "performance gap".
Ratings of importance and satisfaction compared.**

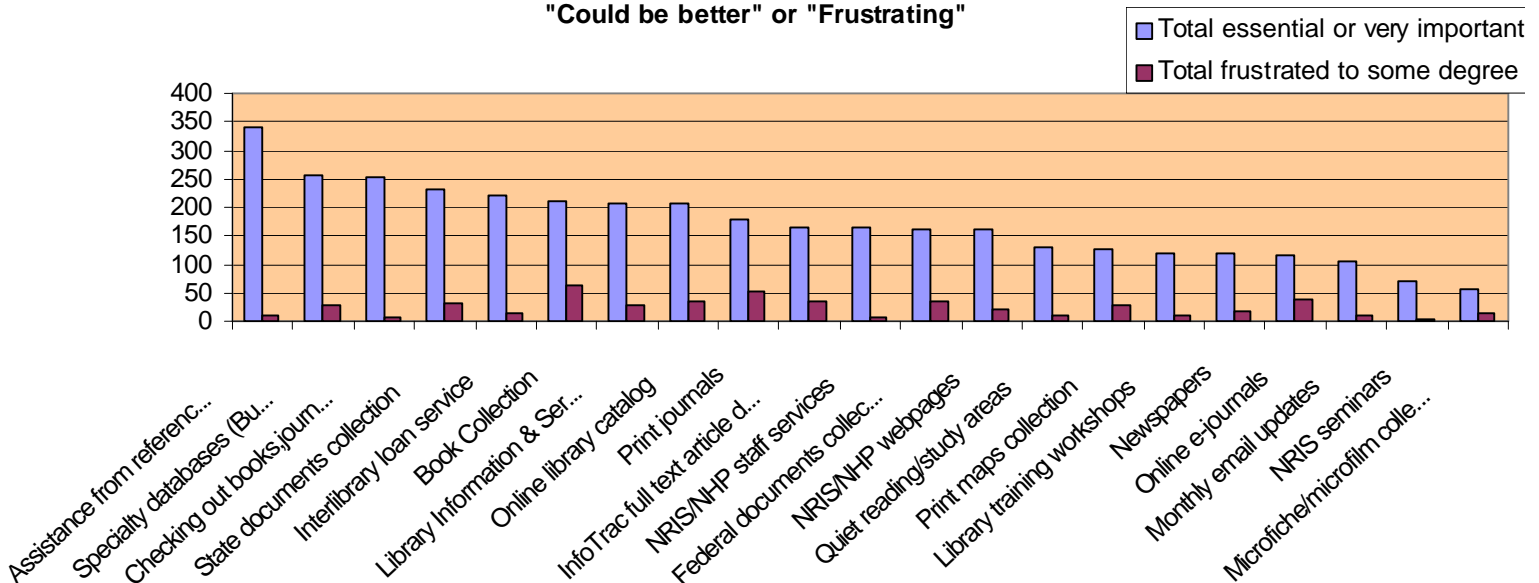


The above chart compares the importance ratings of resources and services with the level of satisfaction for each. If the level of satisfaction falls below the ranking of importance, that item would become a priority for improvement. If the satisfaction level far outweighs its importance, it becomes a candidate for reconsideration and possible elimination.

More instructive for improving services is the chart below that compares the number of "could be better" and "frustrating" responses for each service with its importance rating. Obvious candidates for first attention become the book collection, specialty databases, and the state documents collection. Individual agencies may vary in their assessments however.

Raw numbers were used for these charts instead of percentages because of the variation in number of responses for each category.

**11-13. "Essential or Very Important" compared with
"Could be better" or "Frustrating"**



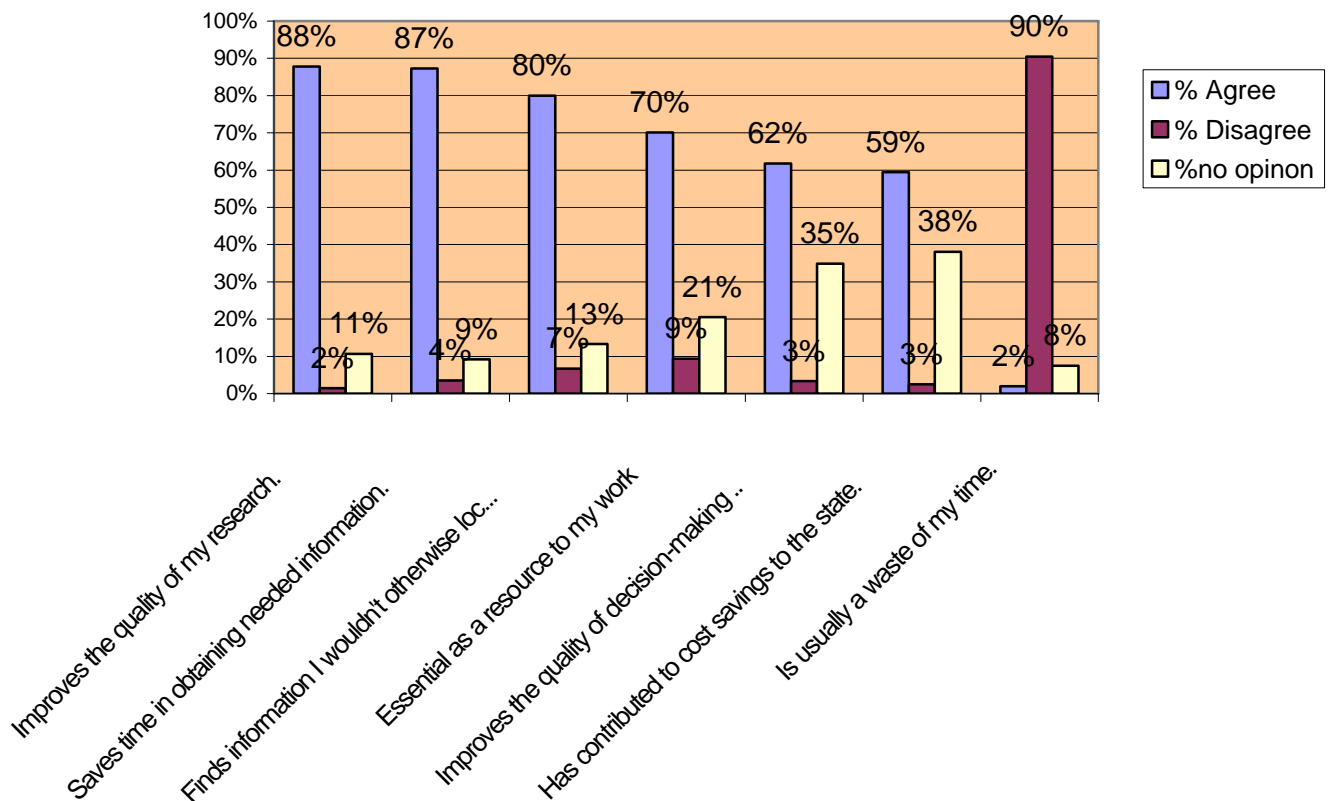
This is the second year that users were asked to respond to statements describing the impact that using the library has on their work. The question was modified to allow for an expression of “no opinion” so that the answers would not be forced. Also, a negative statement was included in this version as a test of true intent when responding to the question. All user responses are reported here. (Note: This chart is not directly comparable to the one prepared last year.)

Respondents again “strongly agree” or “agree” that using the library improves their research, saves valuable time, is an essential resource, and, for many, improves agency decision-making and cost saving.

It is interesting to note here, from a separate analysis of upper & middle manager responses, that 72% of managers, compared to 62% overall, agree that the quality of decision-making in their agency is improved by using the library.

14. Do you agree with these statements about using the Montana State Library?

"Strongly agree" and "Agree" responses combined



15. Please provide any other comments or suggestions about library resources and services. (selected from 170 comments)

The library is like a fire department, you don't recognize how essential it is until you need it.

The State Library is an incredible resource for State employees. They have an excellent staff and services that greatly help improve both the effectiveness and efficiency of state government. Their outreach (newsletter) and workshops have been excellent.

Using any service on-line can be a frustrating experience for anyone. I think you folks do a good job in this regard, and I do appreciate it.

The state library interlibrary loan services enables me to borrow historic books and journals that contain photos and illustrations that illustrate articles published in Montana The Magazine of Western History. They are often the only source from which these images are available. The ILL staff is always understanding of the special need to borrow these volumes in original form, prompt in responding to my requests, and excellent in providing this essential service. Special thanks to them and urgent vote to continue or improve the funding level of ILL.

I don't have time to go to the library. When I need research done, the staff is great in getting me books and articles. Mostly I use the training provided to me by the library to do on-line research myself using various search engines. When it starts getting time consuming, I call John Heldt for help. I don't think my co-workers know that help is a call away, and that they can use library staff to save their time in researching a topic. Where I work (Medicaid) change is occurring very quickly and research and decisions needs to be made "yesterday". I used to feel guilty about it (should be doing it myself), but I don't anymore. John is always very helpful. I think time is at a premium everywhere and any way library staff can save time for state employees doing research is welcome. The training in on-line research also helps employees save time in finding relevant information.

The ability to attend your trainings and have those resources available to me as a grant writer in a state agency is crucial. You do an excellent job and make my job easier.

The reference service has been extremely helpful. I like getting monthly reports of what is new at the library and the services available.

I rated "essential as a resource to my work" as agree. I believe I could obtain some of the information elsewhere, but the State Library reduces the amount of time I would have to spend locating the information and the frustration of knowing something is out there, but not being able to access it in a timely manner for one reason or another.

Please do not cut funding to the library. I sometimes require access to materials that I would not find without it!

This is one of those services that you really need it when you need it and expect it to be there. However, it may be years between visits because the information was valuable for that one project or that particular period of time.

I wasn't aware of the newspapers and professional journals, but they may be helpful to me. Being able to track down obscure books and get them on loan is essential to my work interpreting Montana State Parks and natural features in stories for the public. I would like to learn more about the collection and how I might be able to use it to my advantage on the job. I also do a lot of research on the Internet.

The State Library is an important source of information about Montana. It's important to everyone that it functions to it's fullest for our benefit.

Over the years you have expanded the collection of Montana topo maps and I appreciate this. To continue to acquire those quads you don't have would be GREAT.

The on-line services, especially the searchable catalog and the NRIS site are critical to my program at DEQ and to my daily job. The information that is available through the library make my work product cost-effective (it saves our budget time and money), it makes my work product (reports) extraordinarily good.

I have appreciated the monthly contacts as a means to know more about services and related websites. The access to professional journal articles is important to me as a vocational rehabilitation counselor.

Faced with very difficult budget cuts, I believe you folks are working hard to remain an extremely useful resource.

I just started using the State Library in the last couple of years. I plan to attend more of the Library's training courses to learn how to better use the Library's resources. However, the resources I've used have been extremely valuable, and the Library staff always have been extremely helpful and courteous. I'm not available for the November 20 workshop on Library resources, and I hope you will present this workshop again.

The many resources available at the State Library for state employees are completely unknown to many state employees. I was amazed to discover what was available just through electronic research alone. The State Library should try to reach more state employees to educate them on the many available, invaluable resources.

You provide a much-needed and important service. I personally think you are very under-valued within the state system. Please keep up the wonderful work! I do appreciate your time and efforts!

Thank you for being there for me when I need you.

Some of the services (Question 13?)I have not used only because I haven't had time - not because they are not useful. The staff have been friendly and helpful. I NEED the access to the databases and online literature/journal articles. THANK YOU